



THE  
EDUCATION  
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OF MARTIN COUNTY



**The Education Foundation of Martin County (EFMC)** and the **Martin County School District (MCSD)** are proud to announce that **Felix A. Williams Elementary School's Angela Roberts** has been named the District's 2019-2020 Teacher of the Year.

The winner was announced during the Education Foundation of Martin County's Teacher of the Year Awards Celebration on Friday, November 8, at the Port St. Lucie Civic Center. The event is presented annually by Audi Stuart and Infiniti Stuart.

Ms. Roberts, a third grade English Language Arts and Social Studies teacher, has 28 total years of teaching experience, including 21 in the Martin County School District. Beyond her classroom walls, Ms. Roberts serves as a Youth Life Coach and soloist at her church, high school debate team judge, member of the Keep Martin Beautiful beach clean-up crew, and as an Advanced Choir parent volunteer for both Jensen Beach and Martin County high schools. She has served as a member of the District's English Language Arts (ELA) and Math Frameworks committees, as a mentor for the National Board Certified Teacher Program, Clinical Education field teacher, and as published co-author of a text used by education majors at Florida Atlantic University.

Ms. Roberts' inspiration as an educator comes from making genuine connections with her students. "Each [child] deserves a champion, and I gladly accept that responsibility," she shares. "I understand that before I can educate their minds, I must first connect with their hearts. Really knowing my students as individuals inspires me to design innovative lessons that bring them into the heart of the subject matter, sparking their interests and letting them feel the joy of success."

The inclusive environment Ms. Roberts fosters in her classroom begins with her students' families. At the start of each school year, she asks each of her parents to download the ClassDojo app, which allows them access to individual or group communication about classroom happenings each day. She proudly leads workshops during the school's Literacy Nights, modeling interactive methods to engage children through strategic questioning and conversation during reading.

"As educators, we have the honor and awesome responsibility of influencing a captive audience of future generations," she says. "Time spent in grade school encompasses the most formative years of one's life when most students spend more waking hours in the presence of their teachers than their parents. Sometimes what students need most

is not what is in our lesson plans, but what is in our hearts. Fostering students to become well-adjusted citizens is every educator's responsibility."

**Superintendent Laurie J. Gaylord** was proud to see Ms. Roberts take home this year's award. "Angela Roberts is an outstanding educator who recognizes that being a great teacher involves so much more than the presentation of concepts and standards. She understands that children need someone to truly be there for them and inspire them. These intrinsic qualities are what define Ms. Roberts as a stellar educator, and I am honored to recognize her as the Martin County School District's 2019-2020 Teacher of the Year."

"The board members, staff and volunteers of the Education Foundation would like to sincerely congratulate Angie Roberts for winning this year's Martin County Teacher of the Year award," said **Linda Fitzpatrick**, president of the EFMC. "Angie is a shining example of the best of the best in Martin County's schools. She is a wonderful representative of the extraordinary teachers who are so committed to improving the lives of our students. We look forward to supporting Angie as she represents Martin County in the running for Florida's Teacher of the Year award."

"There is a certain magic and beauty on the face of a child as they enter the classroom for the first time," said **Mario Murgado**, President/CEO of Infiniti Stuart and Audi Stuart. "The teacher may not even understand what is happening as they greet the children on that first day as they look into the eyes of a future president, scientist, firefighter, Nobel peace prize winner, teacher, architect or nurse. The possibilities of what these children can become are limitless. One book, one child, one teacher can change the world!"

"Ms. Roberts builds her classroom community with the understanding that her class is a team where everyone tries their best and celebrates each other's successes," said **Principal Deborah Riley** of **Felix A. Williams Elementary School**. "Ms. Roberts always has a positive outlook that overflows into her classroom and our school setting. Her students thrive from her positive attitude, which improves their self-esteem and, in turn, improves their academic success."

Ms. Roberts will now represent the Martin County School District in the competition to become the Florida Department of Education's Teacher of the Year.

In addition to honoring the District's 2019-2020 Teacher of the Year; winners were named in the categories of **Elementary, Middle, and High School** Teachers of the Year:

**Elementary Teacher of the Year – sponsored by Publix Super Market Charities**

**Angela Roberts, Felix A. Williams Elementary School, Third Grade English Language Arts & Social Studies teacher**

\*\*Winner of the 2019-2020 Martin County School District Teacher of the Year Award.

**Middle School Teacher of the Year – sponsored by Education Foundation of Martin County**

**Laura Leister, Indiantown Middle School, Reading Coach/Intensive Reading Teacher**

Ms. Leister has been an educator for seven years, four of which have been spent serving the children of Martin County. In addition to teaching reading, she has taught visual arts and served as a Positive Behavior Support (PBIS) leader.

"Our students, staff and families have developed a great level of respect and admiration for her dedication to the children of Indiantown," **Principal Jeff Raimann** shares. "There is truly nothing Laura won't do for her students or our school. In addition to being a rock-star reading teacher, Laura has served as our PBIS Leader and goes all-in with her leadership style! She will dress up in any theme necessary, all in the name of generating school spirit and serving as the ultimate cheerleader for our students. This year, she added the role of serving as an Instructional Team Leader, where she supports fellow teachers to enhance their ability to best serve our young Thunderbirds." Ms. Leister is a proud member of the Kappa Delta Pi, Omicron Delta Kappa and Gamma Sigma Alpha educational honors societies, and serves as a middle school track coach and director of Indiantown Middle's Summer Reading Program in her spare time.

**High School Teacher of the Year – sponsored by Keiser University, Port Saint Lucie**

**Jennie Bellone, Willoughby Learning Center, ESE Social Science Teacher (Grades 6-12)**

Ms. Bellone has been an educator for two years, both at Willoughby Learning Center. Graduating from Florida State University with degrees in Psychology and Communication Science and Disorders, Ms. Bellone wholeheartedly believes in the importance of educating the whole-child. "I am fully aware of the importance of establishing trust and how developing the proper relationship with each child facilitates their academic performance and therefore success." Understanding that many of her students struggle with their communication skills, Ms. Bellone has set her sights on obtaining a Master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology to better serve their needs. Outside of the classroom, Ms. Bellone serves as a co-coordinator of mental health group

counseling at Tykes & Teens, and as a Career Resource Outreach Program student liaison.

"No one ever skips Ms. Bellone's class," **Principal Laura Husnander** shares. "She is interesting, caring, engaging and involved with her students. I know these are the reasons the kids love her class, but I also know the technique she is using to make the students feel this way. She is truly excellent in and out of the classroom because she is always focused on the kids."